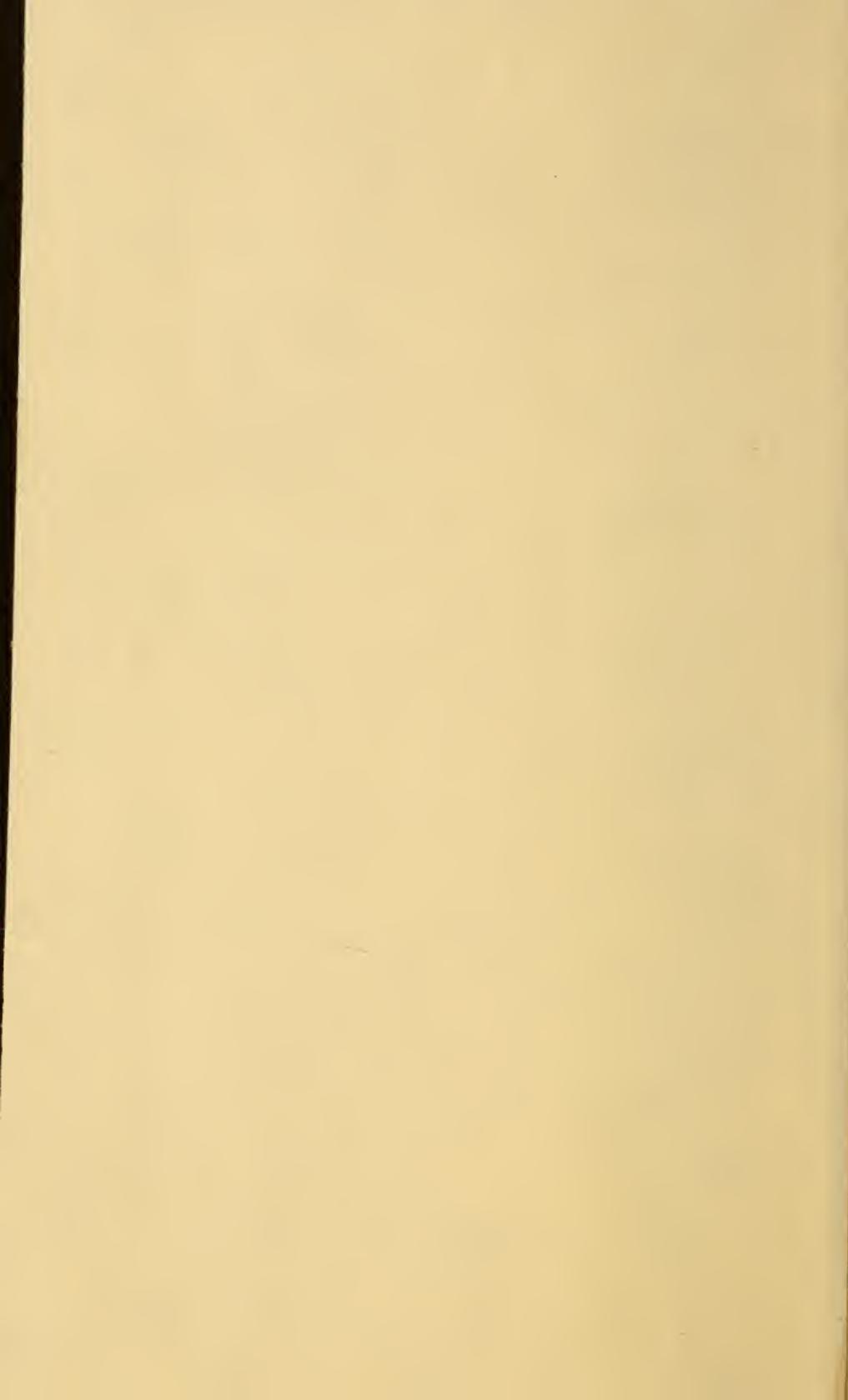


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# HOW TO WRITE A PHOToplay

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## CHAPTER I



### How PHOTOPLAYS ARE PRODUCED

SOME sixteen or seventeen years ago, the motion picture, following close upon the heels of the phonograph, startled the world with animated photographs. At the beginning the films were about eighty feet long. flickered until they all but jumped off the screen and incidentally caught the popular fancy with a "strangle hold" which grows tighter every year.

In the old days the cinematographer produced a picture whenever he had the ideas and, selling as many prints as possible, cast about for weeks looking for more ideas. To-day the motion picture makers produce in the United States alone 120 pictures every week. This means 6,240 pictures a year and every picture is a different story in picture form. Of course, the stories are not all fiction; as scientific films of educational value are rapidly com-

ing into demand. But fully four-fifths of all the pictures produced are based on fiction. These stories are called "scenarios."

To write a photoplay requires no skill as a writer, but it does require a "constructionist." It requires the ability to grasp an idea and graft (please use in the botanical sense) a series of causes on the front end of it and a series of consequences on the other end. An idea so grafted will surely bear fruit; and to learn the art of this sort of mental horticulture it is necessary first to understand, in a general way, how motion pictures are made and what is done in the studio, in the field and in the factory. Let us learn something of these things and begin at the beginning—in the office of the Scenario Editor.

This man, who will return your scenario if it is incapable of bearing fruit or prune it if that is all it needs, is a combination city editor, dramatic critic, poet, make-up editor, proof reader, rewrite man, stage manager, human encyclopedia and statue of patience, and usually has dyspepsia

and is entitled to your consideration. He receives the manuscripts and must read them all. He must be able to grasp the dramatic possibilities of a scenario, see its weaknesses, know how to strengthen it, must be able to recognize a story lifted bodily or in part from some other photoplay, magazine, play or novel and must have the rare faculty of being just as keen and unbiased at the end of a long day as he is in the morning. Because of the amount of the Editor's work, all scenarios should be typewritten on one side of the paper only, double spaced and sent in flat—not rolled or folded. For the same reason the scenario proper should be preceded by a very short, very clear synopsis of the entire story.

Presuming the scenario passes this Cerebus at the entrance of the studio, it goes next to the Chief Producer who rereads it and with a blue pencil as a scalpel cuts out the exterior growth which may have been overlooked by our Cerebus. Having done this, it is passed on to the Producer.

The Producer is to a motion picture

studio what a stage manager is to a theatrical production. They run to specialties. One is a good comedy man, another does his best work in heavy dramatic pieces, still another produces nothing but military pictures, and so on. The Producer, having read the scenario, chooses for the characters players who can best portray the people in the play. Then he arranges the scenes in the order in which he wishes them photographed which, by the way, is very different from the sequence in which they appear on the screen. For example: suppose we have a story of a mother forgetting to take her baby out of the department store check-room and going for it the next day; we would have the scenes on the screen arranged as follows:

1. Interior of House—Mother takes baby, exits.
2. Exterior of House—Mother appears carrying baby and exits.
3. Street Scene—Mother passes with baby—Baby in tears.
4. Exterior of Store—Mother appears and enters Store.
5. Check-room—Mother checks baby.

6. Mother shopping.
7. Same as 3. Mother going opposite direction without baby.
8. Same as 2. Mother enters.
9. Same as 1. Mothers enters, discovers loss, sees it is too late to get baby, so sits down to supper with husband.

Subtitle "Next Morning"

- 10, 11, 12 same as 1, 2 and 3. Mother on gallop.
- 13, 14 same as 4 and 5. Mother gets child—exits happy.

Not much of a story, but it serves the purpose! The Producer will take scenes 1, 9 and 10 in the studio in rapid succession. Numbers 5 and 14 will follow, then 6, all in the studio. Then in the street he will produce the other scenes in the following order: 2, 8, 11, 3, 7, 12, 4, and 13, and the picture is complete in so far as the Producer is concerned.

Each scene is a separate little play in which the players must do what the Producer directs in so far as they are able. One or two rehearsals of five minutes each for simple scenes and the picture is taken. In big scenes, however, two or three days are sometimes consumed in drilling the players in their various parts, the Producer

often playing each part in turn to show just what he desires.

The camera man is the Producer's spectacles. He aids the latter in selecting locations for outdoor scenes and he must be expert in the selection of locations where the light is right for photographic purposes. He must be calm no matter what happens and everlastingly on the job, for if by any chance some accident happens which, though deplorable, will add to the realism, he must constantly turn his camera crank at an unvarying speed and make photos on the speeding film at the rate of sixteen a second. Recently when an explosion was to form part of a picture and the charge went off prematurely, injuring six men, did the camera man rush in with any "first aid?" Not he! When the smoke cleared he was discovered nonchalantly grinding out pictures of the catastrophe which later was to thrill millions of picture fans by its realism. That's what constitutes a *good* photographer.

After the actual taking of the pictures the undeveloped film is sent to

the factory where it is developed, dried, and wound in a roll. This is the negative. After this it is run through a "printing machine" with another film, the latter unexposed. The printing machine photographs the pictures on the new film which in turn is developed and dried and a positive is the result. This positive is the film used in the theatres.

Each scene is developed and printed separately and the positives are all joined afterwards in their proper order with title and subtitles in proper place, and there is nothing left for the manufacturer to do but to collect his profits.

Most manufacturers classify all their films under the following heads:

Trick,  
Farce,  
Comedy,  
Dramatic Comedy,  
Dramatic,  
Tragic,  
Scenic,  
Industrial,  
Military,  
Historical,

Educational,  
Biblical,  
Micro-Cinematographic.

Trick films are those in which the supernatural seems to happen and is done by proper manipulation of the camera. The next five need no explanation. Scenics are travelogues; Military explains itself; Historical means a film, the story of which is based on some fact in the published history of the world; Educational are those teaching Botany, Minerology, Zoology, and all the other 'ologies; Biblical of course means Bible Stories and Micro-Cinematographic refers to the highest form of motion picture—the examination of bacilli of various diseases.

In all these the only classifications in which the reader need be particularly interested are Farce, Comedy, Dramatic Comedy, Dramatic, Tragic, Military and Historical. Of these the tragic is the least desired by the film people, while comedy is the most sought after and the most difficult to get. In consequence a good comedy commands the highest price.

## CHAPTER II



### THE BARE IDEA

THE first essential to a scenario is an idea—a peg on which to hang the story. Ideas for photoplays are not difficult for an alert brain to evolve. Life—everyday life—as you see it about you is full of good ideas for films and with practice one can soon learn to grasp the central thought in an incident, strip it of its commonplaces and with this as a nucleus build a story around it. *The idea* is the main point in a motion picture and in all that goes before or follows it should never be lost sight of by the scenario writer.

Given the idea or feature of the story, the next step is to reason the possible or better still the probable causes which lead up in steps or scenes to this feature and the results which would logically follow such an incident as the creator of the story may have in mind. Every scene should

lead into the next scene without a break in the story being developed and subtitles should only be used when it is impossible to explain the action or the lapse of time any other way or to divide two scenes of a widely diversified nature, thus breaking the mental leap of the spectator into two jumps. *The perfect motion picture has no subtitles and needs none.*

Whenever possible keep the spectator in suspense as to the climax, the unravelling, as long as possible. If the denouement can be withheld until the last scene, so much the better. Suspense is a delightful sensation though we all beg not to be kept in it.

Remember that very few stories are of great interest without the rustle of a skirt.

Don't lose sight of the fact that all the world's a stage and that you can find among your acquaintances nearly every character you need for any story: the hard father, the loving mother, the sweet sister, the sporty brother, the irate old maid aunt, the faithful lover, the infamous scoundrel, the heartless village belle, the heroic

friend, the shrinking bride, the crusty uncle, the saintly preacher, the hypocritical elder of the church, the patient invalid, the sleek banker, the unscrupulous lawyer, the charming adventuress and the innocent bystander. By changing the adjectives around, you have about three hundred and twenty-four characters, some or all of whom you surely know, and one could continue the list *ad infinitum*. Every one of the three hundred and twenty-four contains the possibilities of a story.

Having found the idea then and evolved a story from it and cast your characters mentally, the next step is to write it. Begin your scenario with the title, followed by the word of explanation as to the place and time. Below this, list the characters necessary for the action of the story, their relationship, if any, and their characteristics thus:

**TITLE. HOW THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN**

**A true story of New York—Time, 1912**

**Characters:**

**TOM SMITH**, the Author, lean, hungry individual, much in need of cash, but of heroic and impulsive nature.

**JOHN JEFFRIES**, the publisher, sleek, fat, sceptical and wealthy, but niggardly.

**BILL SAYERS**, the Compositor, a profane man who constantly chews tobacco and criticises the author.

**MRS. SMITH**, the Author's wife, who needs a new coat and urges him to greater efforts.

Men, Women and Children who buy books and write photoplays living happily ever after on their incomes.

This enables the producer to select his players for the parts without having to search for each one in the body of the scenario.

Follow the list of characters with a short but very clear synopsis of the entire play, disregarding scenes altogether, as for example:

“A wealthy publisher visits poverty stricken writer and, taking advantage of this circumstance, induces him to write a book entitled, “How to Write a

Photoplay." Writer agrees, goes home breaks news to wife who, weeping, urges him to keep his word though difficult. Author gets writer's cramp and wife completes work. Deception is discovered by publisher who refuses to pay and writer and wife drop dead from shock. Publisher gloats over his ruin."

The value of the short synopsis lies in the fact that the Scenario Editor who is familiar with the class of picture desired by the company in whose employ he is can thus sidestep a poor story or give particularly careful attention to one whose synopsis sounds good.

Having done this we now come to the scenario proper which is in reality the synopsis rewritten in detail and divided into scenes.

The scenario writer must bear in mind that the first thing to do is to introduce his characters on the screen in a way that almost immediately determines their position in, and relationship to, the story. Many photoplays are failures because a proper beginning has not been arranged.

If, for example, the scene opens in a young woman's home and her lover is coming to see her, the fact that he is her lover and not her brother or husband should be clearly shown in the action, and the action of the play is the thing to write.

Bear in mind that the players have no "lines" to sustain their parts, but must depend entirely upon gesture, expression and grouping to convey their meaning.

In the situation suggested above the young woman, Mary, is seated in the living room attempting to read, near her is an elderly man reading also. Mary doesn't read, however, the book lies open on her lap, her eyes are fixed on vacancy and a smile hovers on her lips. Immediately the spectator gets the hunch that she is in love. Without the smile she may merely be planning how to pay the grocer's bill or she may be contemplating suicide, but the sweet ghost of a smile—a loving expression tells the story. Into the room bounds a youth—if the girl turns instantly and throws her arms about his neck it's probably her brother, but if

she recognizes his footstep, clasps her hands quickly, raises them to her cheek and joy flashes from her eyes and smiling lips and *then* she turns and puts her arms about him it surely is her sweetheart and nobody else. This, if they are engaged. If she loves him but is not engaged and doesn't know whether he loves her or not she does all the above except turning with her arms outstretched. She turns, but it is to shake hands. If they know each other's love and papa in the arm chair doesn't there is a surreptitious kiss. If papa does know all about it he arises, smiles, slaps the youth on the back and makes him feel at home.

These are merely examples of the shades of meaning which may be shown clearly and without difficulty. All that a scenario writer is supposed to write in the actions of the players in detail—this action is called the “business.”

With such an introduction the spectator feels instantly that he has been let in on the ground floor and the figures on the screen are already his old friends.

*Keep your first characters on the screen, even though in different scenes, long enough to get everyone familiar with them and their environment in the story before introducing a new and unexpected phase in the tale. To fail in this is faulty construction.*

Recently I saw a picture with such a fault. The opening scene showed a man released from prison and met at the prison gate by his daughter. This scene was followed by a subtitle reading: "A Year Later—John Morgan is Dying," and then a scene depicting an elderly man on his deathbed. It took several moments for those in the theatre to become mentally adjusted to the fact that this was not the same man who was released from prison a year before but a new character in the play. How much better it would have been if the released prisoner had been shown reaching his home with his daughter, then a subtitle as follows: "A Year later—Bill Snyder receives word that his old friend Morgan is dying." Follow this with a scene of the same room, though more prosperous in appearance. Bill Sny-

der receives a letter asking him to call on Morgan who is dying. Snyder exits; street scene follows; exterior of house follows this; Snyder in both scenes, entering house in latter, then Morgan's sick-room. This really happened in the story, but not in the order suggested above. In the amended arrangement the spectator, who is not yet interested in Morgan but in Snyder, is led by easy stages from Snyder to Morgan and the interest is transferred, or rather divided. *Let one scene lead into the next scene wherever possible.* Motion picture theatre goers don't yearn for mental gymnastics and shouldn't be kept guessing as to who the characters are or why they are in the story at all. Point one, then, is to arrange the entrance of your characters into the plot in a way which informs the spectator of his or her personality and its relation to others, and point two is to keep your scenes in a sequence easily followed by the onlooker.

Inconsistency is a fatal error in photoplay writing. The author is seldom to blame for inconsistencies in

costuming because few writers describe in detail the dress and make up of the people of the play, but an author of a scenario would do well to add such a detail to his list of characters. A beautiful film was utterly spoiled for many, not long ago, because the heroine, a girl reared in poverty and rags, wore throughout the play beautiful French heeled slippers which must have cost at least five dollars and which would not have been worn by this girl even if they were given to her. This mistake was made by a producer usually very keen on minute details of dress and stage setting. Inconsistencies in the scenario itself, however, bring the manuscript home to roost and it is too bad that this is so, for the exercise of a little care will result in the avoiding such a flagrant mistake.

It is in the little things that this sort of error is likely to occur. For example: in a Civil War story the scenario called for a field hospital with the Red Cross flag flying from a staff. Well, the Red Cross wasn't organized until the closing year of the war and

then it was done in Switzerland and the Southerners and Yankees never saw this emblem of mercy during the whole four years of strife.

Another story of the same period required that an officer in Confederate uniform be informed by a courier, also in Confederate togs, that war had been declared between the North and South. But there was no gray uniform of the Confederacy before the C. S. A. was formed! Still another film story showed a southern mansion at the close of the war. All the negroes but one had fled long ago. Enters a Union officer and reads the Emancipation Proclamation and with tears of sorrow streaming down his face the last faithful servitor left his weeping mistress and went north. Why did he weep, or why did he not stay. He wasn't compelled to leave his mistress! She simply couldn't compel him to remain—and if he wished to stay so badly that he wept at parting, why did he go at all. The story required that we get the negro away for a few years and that method was good enough in the mind of the scenario writer.

Another sort of inconsistency is shown in the following: we see a crowd of foundrymen going on strike but they are persuaded by the foreman to remain at work one day more. We know they are foundrymen because in the opening scene they are at work in the foundry, but when they decide to work another day they send a note to the boss saying that they have decided to finish a day's work on the McCormick job, and where do you suppose we see them next? Doing structural iron work on a tall building! The scene was good, but never, never, never! did foundrymen belong to, and work with, the structural iron workers' union, doing both jobs alternately.

One of the easiest ways to fall into an error of this sort is the desire to explain what one man says to another. Many writers require one character to write a note to another and then hand it to the latter in person that the note may be thrown on the screen and read by the audience who are thus apprised of what goes on between the two men. Crude! A little in-

genuity can surely dope out a better way than that. So Point Three—Be consistent in all things! Point Four—Be logical! This should be printed thus: BE LOGICAL! Nothing mars the smoothness of a photoplay more than an illogical action. Photophans are quick to note as serious, an error apparently trifling to the writer and it usually raises a laugh at the wrong time. If you were a young girl who owed your life to a man subsequently put in jail for a crime, and your sense of gratitude compelled you to steal the keys from your father who is the sheriff and to let the prisoner go free, would you carry the handcuffs home with you and put them and the keys under the couch cover for papa to sit on so that he might find them and accuse you? Wouldn't you throw the handcuffs away and return the keys to their proper place so that the prisoner might seem to have escaped alone? Of course! And yet, because the story required that the sheriff find out his daughter's share in the escape the author of this scenario could find

no better way than this illogical action, and it spoiled the story utterly.

Before you submit your scenario you should go over every action carefully and determine positively that there is nothing which is forced and strained and in consequence illogical. Logic is the smoothest form of thought and creates the least mental friction.

## CHAPTER III



### WHAT NOT TO DO

**D**O not introduce absurdities (unless you are writing a farce, and don't write a farcē unless you're absolutely sure it's good). Absurdities are never logical. For instance, do not create a situation wherein a character is compelled to hold a match, a candle or a lantern, because such a light never photographs well and the result is absurd. It shows a player surrounded with light sufficiently bright for photographic purposes holding aloft a much lesser light by which he or she hopes to be able to see. Arrange your scenes to be either dark or light, but never try to show the light itself unless it is the light of a dark lantern which projects a light disc on the wall or hanging of a room otherwise totally dark and which can be shown with comparatively good results.

In writing a comedy film do not at-

tempt to be funny. If you can put over stuff that sounds funny write it in story form and send it to the magazines. When a comedy scenario is submitted, the business of the actors must be explained fully to show just where the comedy comes in, but you need not write it humorously for the benefit of the scenario editor who is decidedly unappreciative of such an effort. It has been said very truly that the scenario writer writes in words and the scenario editor reads in pictures. Cultivate the art of thinking in pictures and you will have fewer scenarios in the rejected barrel.

The best comedy scenes in picture-dom are serious business for the writer, editor, producer and actor, and scripts submitted should be seriously written in an earnest endeavor to make the reader *see* and not hear the humor. So much depends upon the artists in a comedy picture that a mere outline of the business is all that is needed. Do not make your comedy scenario, or any other for that matter, read like a correspondence school

lesson in acting. The actors under the producer's direction are usually quite capable of portraying the action and emotion realistically if the desired action and emotion is suggested without instructions from the author. If they were incapable they would not be holding down the floor in the various manufacturers' studios. Don't be verbose. It is a very easy matter for a writer fired with enthusiasm to overwrite.

Revising is the hardest part of a writer's work. The first copy flows from the inspired pen like the proverbial water from a duck's back and under the influence of watching the story grow the writer finds incentive to continue, but oh! the drudgery of rewriting and revising. Inclination may writhe and squirm and plead to go away and leave the work undone, but Determination must grab Inclination and club it into submission if the writer ever expects to flirt with the elusive Goddess of Success. Revision is imperative. All the big fellows in the literary world do it. Only by careful rewording and rewriting can any

production of this nature be flawless. A good way to do this is to read your scenario aloud to members of the family or to friends; better still is it to have some one read it to you that you may hear the words with another's intonation and vocal shades.

The value of revision is well shown in the two following scenes which also explain clearly overwriting and underwriting. SCENE I: Drawing room of wealthy woman's house. Everything is beautifully furnished in the most expensive manner. Palms and ferns abound. Up stage center are folding doors hung with curtains of exquisite taste. Fine silk damask settle down stage left; other furniture to match arranged around room tastefully. Reception is in progress—ladies in reception gowns are strolling here and there with their escorts admiring the beauties of the room. The hostess, gowned in a white satin creation covered with dewdrop net and trimmed with pearls, sits languidly toying with fan and talking with gentlemen in evening clothes. Another man enters up stage an-

nounced by butler who stands with arms akimbo as he makes announcement. Man approaches hostess and bowing low over her hand expresses his appreciation of his good fortune at having been able to accept her kind invitation, etc.

The above is grossly overwritten. By rereading and revising the author finds that he has much that is absolutely useless and hinders rather than helps the delineation of the scene. Properly revised it should read about as follows:

SCENE I: Richly appointed drawing room decorated for reception. Reception in progress. Guests in groups or couples occupying time as producer desires in background. Hostess seated in foreground earnestly conversing with man. Butler enters, announces newcomer. Man enters—comes directly to hostess, bows—is introduced to other man—turns and engages hostess in conversation. Apparently each greatly interested in other, etc.

Here we have the actual action without the trimmings which the producer can be trusted to supply.

Avoid also writing too little. The scene described above would be difficult to grasp if it were written:

SCENE I: Drawing room—Reception. Hostess and man earnestly talking. Another man enters and engages hostess in conversation.

There is a happy medium in script writing for which the beginner must strive, and this can be gained only by painstaking rewritings.

Make your stories timely and be guided by the wants of various manufacturers as to where to submit the manuscripts. It is scarcely worth while submitting a story in August based upon a rescue from the skating pond, and one would find scant consideration for a scene in a daisy field at a time of year when the scenario editor has to arise at 4 A. M. to put coal on the furnace to keep his feet from being frostbitten in bed. If you get a good hunch for a winter story in midsummer, write it. No one can blame you if you are built that way, but don't expect others to be enthusiastic about a toboganning

scene when the weather is so hot the ice man has to run from his wagon to the refrigerator to get there before the ten cents' worth melts. Save your script until the season suits. Studios do not have a store-room for scripts which must be kept for months before they can be produced.

Furthermore, don't send Biblical stories to a manufacturer who makes a specialty of western stuff. Study the needs of the firms producing pictures and direct your scenarios accordingly. On another page the class of story most sought for by the different studios is touched upon, and ambitious writers cannot do better than to subscribe to *The Moving Picture World* or some other trade paper and carefully study the comments on the films as they appear week by week. This will serve a twofold purpose. One who reads its pages thoughtfully will soon grasp the nature of the stories wanted and is almost sure to find meat for a new story in the descriptions of the old. An old theme described oftentimes suggests an entirely

new idea which can well be built into a most acceptable scenario.

Avoid consecutive scenes in the same set wherever possible. Arrange your scenes so the characters appear with different surroundings in each succeeding scene. This doesn't mean that you cannot use the same scene more than once in a story, but that the same scene shall not appear again without one or more different scenes to divide it. Do not worry over the possibility of making too many scenes in a photoplay. On the stage the play is usually confined to two, three, or four acts and this is possible for the reason that the lines of the players describe the action which occurs between acts and explains the lapse of time, change of scenery, etc. In motion pictures the action must all be self-explanatory and it is not an unusual thing for a photoplay to have thirty or thirty-five different backgrounds or "sets."

If a man is to go from a room in one house to a room in another, there should be a scene showing him entering the second house, but it is un-

necessary to have him leaving the first because in the first room he can be made to catch up his coat and hat and exit. Obviously he is going out, and when one sees him on the street and entering the second house the entire thought is conveyed to the spectator. The question may arise, if his action of putting on his hat and coat suggests leaving the house, why his entering another room and removing them doesn't mean the reverse. The answer is simple—because he may have simply gone into another room in his own house and the man in the theatre seat wonders, "Why, in thunder, did he put his hat and coat on to go along the hall or just from room to room." Seems farfetched, but it isn't. The spectator asks just such questions. There is an exception to the above, of course. If, for instance, you have "established" two houses in the mind of the onlooker—if you have shown John Jones in his room doing something which indicates that it is his room, such as entering, taking off his coat and putting on a smoking-jacket, and you have shown Jane

Smith reading a book or eating chocolates or trying on a dress in her room, so that the spectator feels sure that the two rooms are in different houses and belong to very different persons, then and only then may the street scene be omitted, and John putting on his coat and hat in one scene and going out of the picture, reappearing in the room which we know is Jane's, is sufficiently clear for anyone. Even under these circumstances, however, it is bad policy unless a little action precedes John's entrance, as otherwise the lapse of time which John consumes going from his house to Jane's is not clearly indicated. The meaning is clearly conveyed, however, with the street scene in, and as it will be short and cost nothing for stage scenery the photoplay writer may well bear it in mind.

While writing of scenes it may be well to caution the beginner against inserting scenes which mean nothing to the story. Many photoplay manuscripts fail because the main thread of the story has not been closely adhered to, and scenes with almost no

bearing on the subject are introduced. Be sure every scene is necessary and relates to the theme. Recently a scenario passed through my hands which contained no less than four stories, all so comingled that none were understandable. This is quite a common fault and should be carefully avoided. Develop your scenario with as much care as you would if you were writing a play for the stage, and after it is all written try to locate places where the action is weak or the story strained so these faults may be corrected. At the same time watch carefully for unnecessary action and cut it all out, rewriting the whole play if necessary. The scenario editor and the producer haven't time to rewrite your stories, and your scripts will come back many, many times if the proper care in this particular is not exercised.



## CHAPTER IV



### PHOTOPLAYS THAT WON'T BE ACCEPTED

THERE is a popular prejudice against pictures dealing with suicide, burglary, murder, kidnapping, religious questions or indignities to the State, as also there is against scenes so tragic as to have a depressing affect upon the spectator. This prejudice has not always existed and has not always been respected by the film manufacturers, and because of this, there has been formed in New York, a National Board of Censors to watch for and condemn anything of an objectionable nature. The services of this board are gratuitous and they have no legal authority to reject a picture or compel its withdrawal from the market, but manufacturers submit all of their pictures to this board and abide by its decisions. It is obvious, then, that the manufacturer will not now produce a picture which may cost him

several thousands of dollars if he has any reason to suppose that the Board of Censors will object to its exhibition. Therefore, photoplay manuscripts hinging on or dealing with the list above will usually meet with instant rejection. A crime which is unnecessary is never tolerated. Sometimes a picture suggesting that a crime has been committed at some period prior to the story gets across, but even in using a crime idea in that way it must be of paramount importance to the unfolding of the plot else it will not be accepted. Save yourself trouble and expense and the manufacturer's time by sidestepping crime pictures.

— Select for your theme an idea which embodies *good* things. Avoid anything coarse or suggestive. Make your stories clean, wholesome, happy—a dainty love story, a romantic adventure, a deed gloriously accomplished, a lesson well learned, an act of charity repaid—anything of a dramatic nature which is as honest as daylight. Good deeds are just as dramatic as wicked deeds and clean comedy is far and away more humorous than coarseness.

Keep away from scenes of brutality, degeneracy, idiocy or anything which may bring a poignant pang of sorrow to some one of the millions of people who will read your story in the pictures unless the pang will be one of remorse for a bad deed done or a good deed left undone. In a word, help the film makers produce films which will help those who see them and make the whole world a little bit better for your work.

One of the most foolish things to do is to crib an idea from some other motion picture, play or novel and, re-writing it, send it in as your own. The copyright laws prescribe a penalty of one hundred dollars for every exhibition of a picture based upon a copyrighted story or play when the owner of the copyright has not granted permission to the film makers to use the story for motion picture purposes. Suppose someone reads a copyrighted story in an old magazine, sees the possibilities and rewrites it for a photoplay. Suppose the scenario editor lets it get by and the picture is produced at a cost of three or four

thousand dollars. Suppose the manufacturer disposes of sixty positives and the sixty films are in use in sixty different theatres every day for a week. Usually a film is shown five times a day. What is the result? At the end of a week the owner of the copyright finds the picture and bringing suit collects all the profits the film maker has made in disposing of the films and one hundred dollars for every exhibition of every print in every theatre each day since the film was issued. The fines alone would amount to \$210,000.

Don't waste time in rewriting other people's brain children, for the scenario editor goblins will catch you sure as fate, and once you get a reputation for plagiarism not a film maker will dare to buy any manuscript from you for fear it is copyrighted. The admonition not to crib an idea from another's story does not mean, of course, that one cannot snatch a suggestion from some story, printed, played or photographed, and work up a new plot therefrom. New stories after all are but old ones revamped.

This process is entirely commendable, and many a good scenario has been based upon an idea overlooked by the author of the scenario in his own script.

Let your theme be as original as possible, but make your construction of the theme unique. One scenario writer I know writes absolutely punk stuff except for the fact that there is always in his stories a new turn to an old idea—an unexpected little suggestion which puts his stories over. Out of ninety or a hundred scripts of his submitted to one manufacturer not more than twelve or fifteen have been returned. Always let the unexpected happen—that makes a picture interesting and piquant, and that is the thing required by film makers the world over. Another man who submits scripts is so full of ideas he doesn't have time to work them up into story form and simply writes suggestions about three lines long around which a good story may be written.

One of the most successful comedies was produced upon the suggestion of a young woman who entered an office

and said: "My name is Miss Jones and my address is such and such a place. Why not make a comedy picture of a woman in a hobble skirt? If the suggestion is worth anything send me a check." Hobble skirts were at this time torturing the eyes of mankind and the suggestion was accepted and a check for \$5.00 sent to the girl. Mere suggestions if accepted seldom bring over five dollars to the suggestor because the suggestee has to write the story. If Miss Jones had worked out the story herself it would probably have paid her twenty-five or thirty dollars instead of five.

Just a hint or two more:

Keep your situations tense.

Never let a scene sag in the middle like a sway-backed horse.

Put backbone into your stories and keep it there.

Work your story up to an unexpected climax and then finish it.

Be careful to avoid an anti-climax.

Sidestep scenes in bad taste or those which may hurt someone on account of race or religion.

Never try to write down to the level you may presume motion pictures are on. The manufacturers want stories of a high order. Let your comedy situations be funny and not silly.

Avoid absolute impossibilities and improbabilities.

Keep always to the thread of your story and be sure there's a thread to keep to.

Don't take hackneyed subjects.

Don't attempt a masterpiece for your first effort—a bright little dramatic comedy is a good thing to begin on.

Don't strive for literary style in your scenario—it isn't appreciated, is unnecessary and it's not the thing purchased.

Create as often as possible a new situation or a new location for your scenes—people tire of one kind of drawing room and one kind of gesture.

Always typewrite your manuscript and always enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for its return—it may bring you a check instead.

Always put your name and address plainly on each sheet of manuscript.

Always keep a copy of a script you send away, the letter may get lost in the mail.

Don't expect that your first effort will be accepted and don't be discouraged if you get a number of scripts returned.

Remember that there is more than one maker of films and that what is poison to one is meat to another.

Don't look for a check the day after you submit the scenario.

Don't send to one manufacturer a script returned from another manufacturer which shows evidences of having been handled before and refused. Better rewrite it than thus show its refusal by another scenario editor.

## CHAPTER V



### A MODEL SCENARIO

THE following scenario shows better than a volume, just how your script should be constructed and we will take up the various whys and wherefores as the script proceeds.

#### THE MISPLACED PETTICOAT

Place, Any Resort Hotel—Time, Present

##### CAST

WHIFFLES—Stingy man away on vacation without wife.

MRS. FORTS—Wife of busy lawyer also away on vacation.

MRS. WHIFFLES—Jealously suspicious.

MR. FORTS—Nervous and excitable.

MAID—At Hotel.

PORTER—At Hotel.

Hotel Guests, Passersby, etc., etc.

##### SYNOPSIS

Whiffles away on vacation fails to tip porter on leaving, latter sees

chambermaid hurrying with a forgotten petticoat after Mrs. Forts, who is also leaving. Porter takes garment and places same in Whiffles' suitcase. Upon arriving home, Mrs. Whiffles finds petticoat and thinking she has ground for divorce goes to consult lawyer, taking garment along as evidence. Lawyer proves to be Mr. Forts, who recognizes wife's petticoat. He swears vengeance upon both Mr. Whiffles and Mrs. Forts and proceeds to go after it, finally winding up with all characters at summer resort, when everything is satisfactorily explained.

## ACTION

### SCENE I—UP STAIRS HOTEL CORRIDOR

Showing two or more room doors. (Two in foreground called *A* and *B* for convenience of writer and producer.) Whiffles enters corridor from Door *A* closely followed by porter carrying suit case. Porter looks angry—Whiffles annoyed and shaking head vigorously. Porter holds out hand for tip—Whiffles refuses vehemently.

Mrs. Forts enters corridor from Door *B*. Whiffles and Mrs. Forts look at each other with blank stare showing no signs of recognition. Mrs. Forts followed by maid carrying suit case. Maid all smiles—Mrs. F. tips maid liberally—takes case—goes down stairway. Maid courtesies and retires through Door *B*. Whiffles stalks down stairway beckoning porter to follow with grip. Porter prepares to obey. Maid enters hastily from Door *B* carrying white petticoat. Porter stops her and Maid indicates petticoat belongs to Mrs. Forts, shows tip and starts to run after Mrs. Forts—Porter stops her—explains that Whiffles has given no tip—takes petticoat from maid and puts into Whiffles' suit case. Maid convulsed with laughter exits through Door *B* and Porter grabs case and exits down stairway.

*Here by the simple expedient of introducing numbered doors, a porter, a maid and two people with grips, the hotel atmosphere is immediately shown. That the two people are strangers and very different in char-*

acter is instantly recognized and thus from the first moment, their relationship to each other in the story is established. By placing the petticoat in Whiffles' grip we know he is a married man else the porter would have had no revenge.

## SCENE II—RAILWAY STATION PLATFORM

Enter Mrs. Forts carrying case—a moment later enter Whiffles carrying case. Train pulls in. Mrs. Forts and Whiffles climb aboard. Train pulls out and disappears.

*There is no need to introduce a street scene between I and II because in I we see them about to leave and in II we see them at the place we expect them to go to—the railway.*

## SCENE III—SECOND RAILWAY STATION PLATFORM

Train pulls in, Mrs. Whiffles on platform waiting for husband. Mrs. Forts alights first closely followed by Whiffles. Mrs. Whiffles eyes Mrs. Forts with suspicion. Grabs Mr.

Whiffles—Pecks him with kiss—All exit.

*This scene is necessary to “get them off the train” and serves to indicate that though unknown to each other they live in the same town. Also we learn here that Mrs. Whiffles is jealous.*

#### SCENE IV—STREET AND EXTERIOR WHIFFLES’ HOUSE

Mr. and Mrs. Whiffles appear and enter house.

*Scene IV is introduced merely to separate III and V, so that the characters do not seem to jump from one scene to another.*

#### SCENE V—INTERIOR OF WHIFFLES’ HOUSE

Mr. and Mrs. Whiffles enter. Whiffles puts suit case on table and sits down. Mrs. Whiffles goes to suit case to remove contents. Opens case—takes out first thing Mrs. Fort’s petticoat. Looks astonished, then angry,

shows garment accusingly to Whiffles. Whiffles dumbfounded. Can't explain. Mrs. Whiffles goes into rage—grabs hat, violently pushes Whiffles back into chair and exits through door. Whiffles looks henpecked.

#### SCENE VI.—STREET

Mrs. Whiffles rushing along wildly waving petticoat. Panoramic ending in

#### SCENE VII—BUILDING ENTRANCE

Mrs. Whiffles hurries into building.

*This scene is of course vital to the story. We are now interested in Mr. and Mrs. Whiffles, and not Mr. and Mrs. Forts. How Mrs. Forts reached home or when or where is unnecessary and is consequently left out. The interest has been transferred now to Mrs. Whiffles, although Mrs. Forts has been on the screen long enough for us to retain a subconscious interest in her. Because Mrs. Whiffles takes her hat she is obviously going out, consequently scene VI and VII simply*

*show the end of her quest—an office building entrance.*

SCENE VIII—HALLWAY AND DOOR, LATTER MARKED M. D. FORTS & CO., LAWYERS

Mrs. Whiffles stops at door, reads name and enters.

*The sign on the door enlightens anyone who has been in doubt as to where Mrs. Whiffles was going.*

SCENE IX—MR. FORTS' OFFICE WITH  
MR. FORTS AT DESK

Mrs. Whiffles bows as does Mr. Forts. Latter motions Mrs. Whiffles to be seated. Mrs. Whiffles talks volubly, wildly waving petticoat and gesticulating toward it. Mr. Forts looks sad and shakes head. Holds out hand for petticoat. Receives it—examines it—first casually—then intently—finally with wild eyed recognition. Looks at waist band—sees name “Martha Forts” (foreground of name). Jumps up and raves. Mrs. Whiffles jumps up and two race up and down

office. Mr. Forts explaining that the petticoat belongs to his wife. Mrs. Whiffles begins to weep. Mr. Forts comforts her. Mrs. Whiffles' head falls on his shoulder. Door opens silently. Neither see it—Mrs. Forts enters—sees tableau—speaks sharply. Both others start guiltily. Mrs. Forts upbraids husband. Mr. Forts retaliates waving petticoat under her eyes. Mrs. Whiffles joins the mele. Mrs. Forts hurriedly escapes—followed by Mr. Forts and Mrs. Whiffles still talking excitedly.

*In this scene everyone is already into the secret and the impression is that Mrs. Whiffles is merely going to get a divorce. Hence the sudden realization that the lawyer's wife is the owner of the petticoat strikes the audience as a distinct surprise and the result is a spontaneous laugh. Heretofore no one knows the name of the woman at the hotel, but when the lawyer points to his name on the door and the name in indelible ink on the petticoat, it all becomes clear in an instant. The entrance of Mrs. Forts*

*when Mrs. Whiffles has her head on Mr. Forts' shoulder develops another phase of the plot which the spectators haven't anticipated and is therefore more keenly enjoyed by them.*

SCENE X—EXTERIOR MR. FORTS' HOUSE

Mrs. Forts enters.

SCENE XI—MRS. FORTS' ROOM

Enter Mrs. Forts, packs up her things—writes note:

*To my Husband.*

*Dear Sir: I have returned to the hotel. When you have repented you may come to me.*

YOUR WIFE.

Lays note on table, puts on hat and exits from room.

*Interest now centering in Mrs. Forts, it is necessary for the next two or three scenes to follow her movements to get her placed where she may be left for the moment as the interest reverts to Mrs. Whiffles, the lawyer and Whif-*

*fles. By inserting a note to her husband we know what she is going to do, which obviates the necessity of showing it in scenes.*

SCENE XII—EXTERIOR MR. WHIFFLES'  
HOUSE

Mr. Forts and Mrs. Whiffles appear still angry. Mr. Forts now carries revolver which he brandishes wildly—approach steps.

*Mrs. Forts out of the way we indicate what the others have been doing (going to Mr. Whiffles' house) by showing them in the street before the house.*

*In Scene XII we have brought the spectator's interest back to Whiffles and so we must show him.*

SCENE XIII—INTERIOR MR. WHIFFLES'  
HOUSE

Whiffles sitting forlornly on chair near window. Hears commotion outside, looks out of window, sees Forts with revolver, shows fear, gathers up

few belongings and exits by rear window just as Mrs. Whiffles and Forts enter. They quickly turn and exit through door they entered.

*Scene XIII can be made exceedingly funny. Whiffles is sad about his misfortune but he doesn't expect to be assassinated. However, when he sees the lawyer with the revolver, the whole situation flashes across him in one illuminating moment. The spectators get his idea at the moment he does and his difficulty is sure to excite their risibility.*

#### SCENE XIV—(SAME AS XII)

Mr. Whiffles is jumping fence as Mrs. Whiffles and Mr. Forts dash out of house in pursuit.

#### SCENE XV—RAILROAD STATION

Mr. Whiffles rushes up, train pulls in, Whiffles gets on, train pulls out. Mrs. Whiffles and Forts arrive just too late.

## SCENE XVI—RAILROAD STATION

Train arrives—Mr. Whiffles alights and walks out of picture. Mrs. Forts also alights and walks same direction as Whiffles.

*Here it is unnecessary to show Mrs. Forts catching train, as we already know she is going to the hotel and we see her alight from the train in Scene XVI.*

## SCENE XVII—ENTRANCE LOBBY HOTEL

Whiffles arrives and gives bag to porter after signing register. Mrs. Forts arrives and gives bag to porter. Both exit to elevator followed by porter.

*Scene XVII is just a connecting scene to avoid a bad mental jump.*

## SCENE XVII—(SAME AS I)

Whiffles enters his old room. As Mrs. Forts is about to enter her room, Maid approaches. Sees Mrs. Forts,

thinks about petticoat. Calls Mrs. Forts aside and tells her the story of the porter's trick. Mrs. Forts grateful, gives maid tip. Maid exits. Mrs. Forts turns toward room as Mr. Forts and Mrs. Whiffles approach—both very excited. Mrs. Forts turns, sees couple—shows delight. Whiffles at this moment appears. Mr. Forts grabs him. Whiffles tries to explain—Mrs. Forts does so for him. Mr. Forts doesn't believe it. Porter enters. Whiffles grabs porter—asks for the truth—porter denies everything indicating to Whiffles aside that he wants money. Whiffles gives liberal tip—asks porter again and again—porter denies. By-play kept up until porter has all of Whiffles' money and then still denies. Enter maid—sees trouble for woman who has been liberal—tells truth—porter attempts to escape—is caught and simultaneously is kicked down stairs by Whiffles and Forts. All embrace and forgive.

CURTAIN

*In this scene the arrival of Mr. Forts and Mrs. Whiffles is a surprise,*

*because we have seen them miss the train, but instantly we realize that they have taken a second train and arrived a little later.*

*The sight of the porter separating the miserly Whiffles from all his money and then denying everything is very funny and with good characterization can be made a scream.*

*Here we have a sudden and complete explantion—the story is finished, so the end of the film is reached at once.*

A close study of the above will undoubtedly be of inestimable value to all those who desire to enter this lucrative field of photoplay writing. Careful avoidance of anything useless and a close adherence to the meat of the plot will surely result in an acceptable scenario, provided, of course, the original idea is good. No amount of thought or construction can ever make a good idea out of a bad one. So after all, the chief factor in all of this, is to get a good idea to start with.

The prices for scenarios vary

greatly. Sometimes people send in merely a suggestion of three or four sentences, around which a photoplay can be written. Manufacturers usually pay \$2.00 or \$3.00 for such ideas, while a scenario well planned and comprehensively written around the same thought, might have netted them as much as \$50.00. It is a good plan for scenario writers to place upon their photoplays the amount they expect to receive for it, as it is the duty of every scenario editor to buy scripts as cheaply as possible, and the checks in payment are so worded that the acceptance of the check constitutes a receipt in full for the story named on the voucher. If the price asked is too high and the story is good, the manufacturer will undoubtedly communicate with the writer and ask if he will accept less. Do not make your price too high. Manufacturers seldom pay more than \$50.00, and the average price is \$25.00; but a scenario submitted with no price stated is apt to bring the writer a check for \$10.00, consequently, a beginner should ask about \$20.00 or \$30.00, depending

upon his own idea of the quality of the story. Be fair in your judgment of your own work and do not ask exorbitant prices, as an exorbitant price on a poor story will certainly disgust the scenario editor and your scenario will be returned.

## CHAPTER VI



### WHERE TO SELL

THE market for photoplays is large and growing. The demand for moving picture plots is increasing all the time and the field is practically undeveloped. Moving pictures are now made showing how a plant grows. You can actually see a blade of grass growing! This is very wonderful and yet simple when you know how it's done. An exposure is made just as the plant noses its way through the ground and a few hours later another exposure is made and so on until the blade is so old that it withers up and is ready to blow away. By projecting the pictures at the regular rate of sixteen a second you can have in a few minutes the life history of a blade of grass or a stalk of rice unrolled before you. Pictures are made of wild birds in the most inaccessible places—on mountain sides and in cane thickets. To make

a single film of this wild nature has meant the expenditure of thousands of dollars. A moving picture operator has even been lowered into the pit of Vesuvius and taken films of the fearful crater. Soon moving pictures will be part of every school and already large machinery is being sold by motion pictures. The salesman for a dredge or derrick company—for a machine that can not very well be moved about on account of its size and weight—comes into the office of a probable purchaser, unpacks an outfit that looks like a thick suitcase, draws down the blinds until the room is darkened, attaches to the electric light wire and throws pictures of the derrick that he is selling on the wall, so that the interested man will not have to leave his office to get a complete understanding of the machine.

It is a good idea to read *The Moving Picture World* or *The New York Sunday Telegraph* occasionally, for they will give the names of all the new concerns in their news about moving pictures. Of course they will not tell what these concerns want, but you can

try them out until you find the kind of script that goes with them. Each month in *The Magazine Maker*, 241 Fourth Avenue, New York, will be found the wants of the new companies, so that it will not be much trouble for you to keep up to the minute on the needs of the producing concerns.

Here are the companies that buy and pay for photoplays:

*The Independent Moving Picture Company, 515 West 56th Street, New York.*

This company is known as the *Imp* on account of its initials. They make a specialty of American scenes, although once in a while they send a troupe into Mexico. They do not care for Western and Indian pictures. They like strong dramas. They do not want farces or pictures where the worn out chase is used and do not go in for trick films. They do not purchase material made from copyrighted books. The return address should be written plainly and the manuscript must not be rolled.

*The Pacific Motion Picture Company, Temple Street, Los Angeles, California.*

This concern aims to get unique plots and situations. They pay for an accepted contribution on the royalty basis. Their promise is to be very liberal.



*The Champion Film Manufacturing Company, 145 West 45th Street, New York.*

Historical and military photoplays always appeal to this company. They require that the incidents be correct in every particular. They also use good western plots. They demand that all their pictures have a novel plot and have a good climax. The studio and factory of this concern are at Coytesville, New Jersey, but photoplays may be sent to the New York office.



*Thomas A. Edison, Inc., 2826 Decatur Avenue, Bedford Park, New York City.*

This concern asks that if the plot be not original with the author that he tell exactly how he came by it. This concern is only part of the Edison companies, as the electrical part is at Orange, New Jersey. They go in for the very best.



*The Vitagraph Company of America, East 15th Street and Locust Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.*

They have a rule that all manuscripts must be typewritten. They use a wide variety of material—comedies, romances, and stories of tragedy and melodrama. If they don't like the manuscript they may send it back the day they receive it; each day that they hold it increases the chance of acceptance.



*American Film Manufacturing Company, Ashland Block, Chicago, Ill.*

They are strong on the American cowboy. Even though it is a western scene they are not very likely to use it unless it is an out and out cowboy

picture. They have a big equipment of horses and cow-punchers and like to keep them busy. Just recently have they taken up home scenes dealing with society or having a touch of drama in them. But still they are specialists in cowboy films.



*The Kalem Company, 235 West 23rd Street, New York.*

It uses a few western plays. It also favors historic photoplays and has a relish for comedies.



*Pathe Freres, 1 Congress Street, Jersey City Heights, New Jersey.*

They like comedies and want only scripts with American setting for the reason that they have a large producing company in Paris and in several other countries.



*The Eclair Film Company, Linwood Avenue, Fort Lee, New Jersey.*

They go in for quick action comedies. Also they like strong dramas with historical incidents.



*The Solax Company, Congress Avenue, Flushing, New York.*

They want photoplays on business themes. Once in a while they use a mystery story. Their specialty is spectacular melodrama.



*The Lubin Manufacturing Company, 20th and Indiana Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa.*

They are in the market for comedies and dramas with now and then a western play. They like unique plots and situations.



*Reliance Films, 540 West 21st Street, New York.*

These films are made by the Carlton Motion Picture Laboratories. They like intense dramas. They pay well

for their plots, but they set a high standard.



*G. Melies, 204 East 38th Street, New York.*

This is the headquarters of the concern, but they want their scenarios sent to Santa Paula, California. Their producing company is in California and for that reason they want the scenarios sent to Santa Paula. They want plots that can be enacted in California with such settings as can be found in that state. They do not want military scenes or anything of a spectacular order. They do not want plays that call for children. They like to have riders and horses in their plays.



*The Gaumont Company, Congress Avenue, Flushing, New York.*

This is only the American office of this company with headquarters in Paris. They are not manufacturing films in this country just now, but hope to a little later.

*R. Prieur, 10 East 15th Street, New York.*

This is the concern that puts out the Lux Films. They are only importers and are not at the present time in the market for photoplays.



*George Kleine, 166 North State Street, Chicago, Ill.*

Some writers think that he is in the market for scenarios, but he is not, as he is only an importer of films. He imports Cin-es and the Urban-Eclipse films.



*The Majestic Motion Picture Company, 145 West 45th Street, New York.*

They do not want Western or Indian stories. Their field is rather a broad one and are willing to consider a wide variety of manuscripts.



*Essanay Film Manufacturing Company, 1315 Argyle Street, Chicago, Ill.*

This company gets its name from the initials of its president and secretary—S. and A. Their business office is in the First National Bank Building, Chicago, but their studio is on Argyle Street. They want plays that can be acted by their Chicago company and prefer “interiors”—that is, sets that are not out in the open.



*Crystal Film Company, Wendover and Park Avenue, New York City.*

They go in for a wide variety of material and are courteous in their treatment.



*The Seneca Feature Film Company, Nicholas Building, Toledo, Ohio.*

This concern is not in the manufacturing business. They handle the rights for different films for Ohio and Michigan.



*The Biograph Company, 11 East 14th Street, New York.*

They like scenarios which make you think; scenarios that show up the differences between the rich and the poor. This is a big company and capable of handling a wide variety of films. Scenarios for several months to come should be sent to the western office of the company, Georgia Street, Los Angeles, California.



*The Thanhouser Company, New Rochelle, New York.*



*Rex Motion Picture Company, 573 Eleventh Avenue, New York.*



*Comet Film Company, 344 East 32nd Street, New York.*



*Powers Motion Picture Company, 422 West 216th Street, New York.*

*The Selig Polyscope Company, East Randolph Street, Chicago, Ill.*

They are in the market for all kinds of scenarios, pp comedy, drama, Western and so on. They have a specialty, however, of big effects—scenes with lots of people in them. They have studios in Los Angeles and in Denver, so that a writer can keep in mind that they can also put on a photoplay that can be acted in either of these places.



*The Nestor Film Company, Bayonne, New Jersey.*

They use about twice as many Western films as they do dramas. They have a company in California and like plots with Western flavor. Western scenarios should go to Hollywood, Cal.



*St. Louis Motion Picture Company, 25th and Montgomery Street, St. Louis, Mo.*

*New York Motion Picture Company,  
251 West 19th Street, New York.*



*Victor Film Manufacturing Company (Giles R. Warren, Editor), 573  
11th Avenue, New York City.*

This company has been formed to present photoplays in which Miss Florence Lawrence will be the star. Both comedies and drama will be done, but the stories must be unusually good.



*Great Northern Film Company, 42  
West 14th Street, New York.*



*Century Film Company, Fuller  
Building, Springfield, Mass.*



*Penn Feature Film Company, Ca-  
sino Theatre, Easton, Pa.*



*Superior Film Company, 32 Union  
Square, New York.*

## ENGLISH COMPANIES

Hepworth Manufacturing Company,  
2 Denman Street, Picadilly Circus,  
London, W., England.



Cricks & Martin, 101 Wardour Street,  
London, W., England.



Jury's Imperial Pictures, 7a Upper  
Street, St. Martin's Lane, London,  
W. C., England.



Monopole Film Company, Cine  
House, Greek Street, London, W.,  
England.



First, get an idea; second, study  
your idea until you have a plot; third,  
study the plot until you have a photo-  
play; fourth, write it roughly, dividing  
it into scenes; sixth, revise it; sev-  
enth, write it more carefully, cutting  
out in one place and adding in an-

other; eighth, revise it; ninth, revise it; tenth, revise it; eleventh, typewrite it on one side of the paper only, enclose it with a self-addressed stamped envelope for reply and mail. Never send a bunch of scenarios at once. Send one at a time. The field is big and growing.



#### NOTE:

The Independents, consisting of the Champion, Imp, Solax, Reliance, Rex, and other film manufacturing companies, are about to organize themselves into one company and most of the scenarios will then be purchased through one office. This will be known as the Universal Film Manufacturing Company and their office will be at 1 Union Square, New York City.

ALWAYS REMEMBER—

To get a good idea to work on.

To tell your story in as few words as possible.

To notice what company has made the film when you go to a picture show.

That what one company may turn down even without a personal letter another concern may accept and feature as a star play.

That a photoplay may be written in ten minutes, but that the idea is worth thinking over for a week.

# HOW TO KEEP UP TO DATE

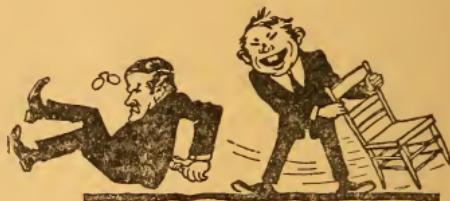
*Writers of moving picture plays can get the names and addresses of all new picture companies in THE MAGAZINE MAKER which is a magazine for writers. It will tell you each month just what the new companies will buy and all changes in the policy of the old concerns. With Mr. Hoagland's book and THE MAGAZINE MAKER to give you the latest news you are equipped from beginning to end to write photoplays. Single copies are 15 cents and the yearly subscription is one dollar.*

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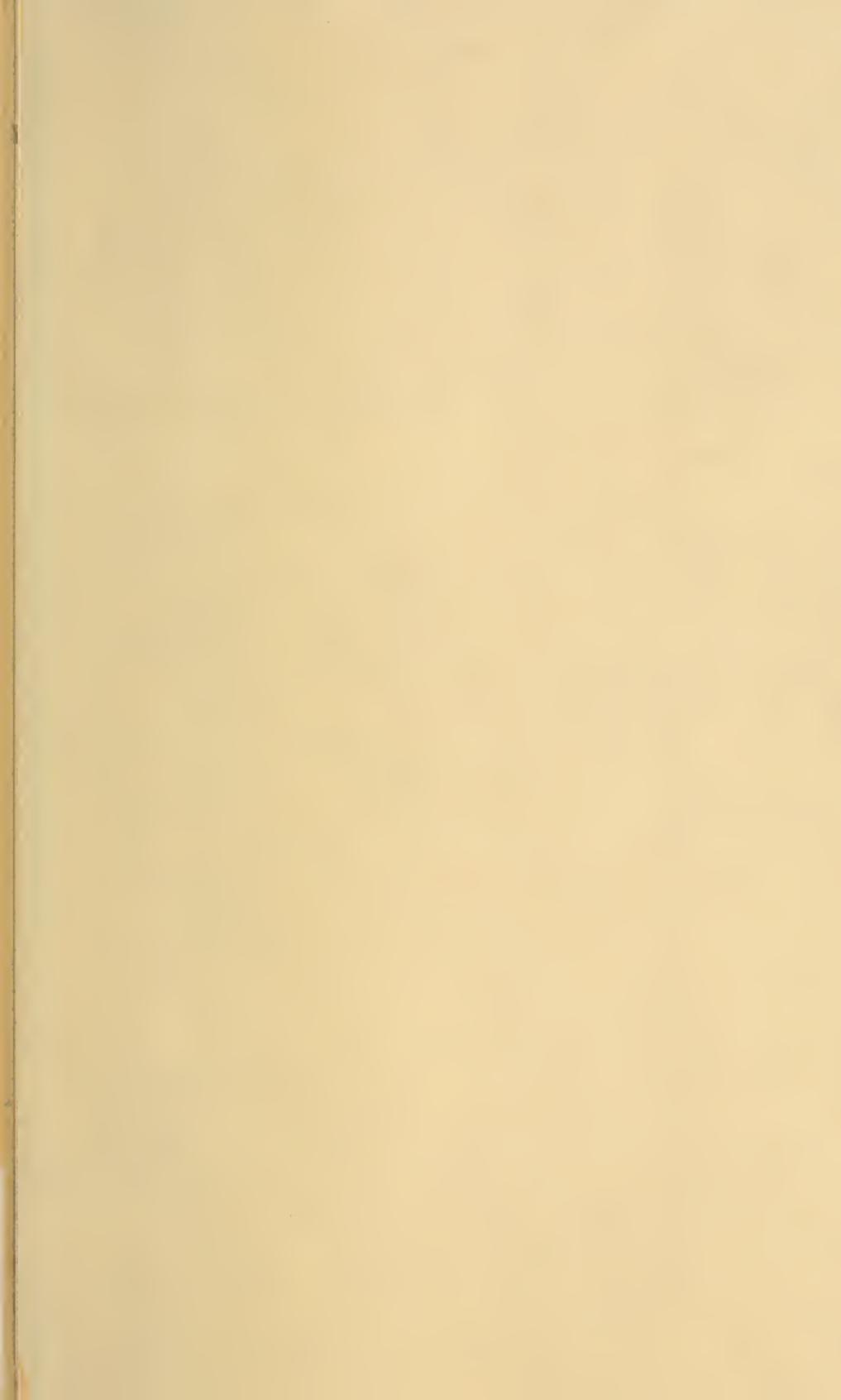
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